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Professional Integrity in Higher Education: Behind the Green Curtain in the Land of Oz

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Abstract

This article discusses concerns related to professional integrity in academics and to the use of collegiality as an informal criterion for employment and evaluation decisions. We question the nature of the educational enterprise and the academic environment within which both students and faculty operate. We use the AAUP Statement on Professional Ethics to guide our examination of collegiality, and the three traditional areas of faculty evaluation (teaching, scholarship, and service), as they relate to professional integrity. We discuss potential pitfalls in situations involving integrity concerns, and suggest that the use of collegiality in professional decisions is more prevalent and potentially harmful than many realize.

Introduction

The Wizard of Oz hid behind his green curtain, smoky illusions, and displays of splendor because he was not really a wizard, but only a passenger in a wayward hot air balloon who landed in Emerald City in the Land of Oz. He was a sham and a quack, peddling things that were always freely available and within reach of unwitting but very desperate and needy consumers.

Dorothy Gale's motley team of tattered travelers each yearned for something to make him complete. The Cowardly Lion needed some courage, the Tin Man needed a heart, and the Scarecrow needed a brain, so the Great and Powerful Oz obliged them, for a price. They had to kill the Wicked Witch of the West and bring back her broomstick. As their well-earned reward, he gave each of them a tangible symbol of what they felt they were lacking; concrete signs of accomplishment. The Cowardly Lion received a medal, the Tin Man got a ticking red heart-shaped clock, and the Scarecrow got a diploma. The moral is that each of us has the power within us to satisfy our own needs. Despite that fact, however, we apparently need symbolic and external validation of our accomplishments.

The Wizard's alter-ego, Professor Marvel, traveled the Kansas countryside peddling his wares and offering visions into the future for the young and willful Dorothy Gale before the tornado took her to Munchkin Land. He sold hope to the hopeless. His title was not earned in the hallowed halls of academia, but used to make himself more credible with the buying public as he sold elixirs and cure-alls. He provided what people believed they needed, aided by his fake credentials, his educated manner, exotic trappings, and the gullibility and desperation of human beings.

Both the Wizard and Professor Marvel were not as they seemed and the things they peddled were not as they portrayed. Outward appearances, rather than internal worth, were crucial to marketing products and services. Both packaged products that relied on perception and belief within impressive and superficially credible, but unearned and meaningless facades, to garner respect, like the biblical "new wine in old bottles."

This article is about professional integrity. We question the nature of the educational enterprise and the academic environment within which both students and faculty must operate. We develop parallels between the educational institutions and academic professionals of today and the traveling medicine shows and charlatans of the past. Questions of integrity are involved when we begin to examine the products that we offer our consumers and the working environments within which we offer those products.

Have our institutions become traveling medicine shows? Has "education" become snake oil that we, as Professor Marvels, peddle? Do we hand out diplomas like the Great Oz only as symbolic representations of knowledge and intellectual accomplishment without knowing whether true learning has taken place? Is the working environment for academic professionals behind the big green curtain where no one can really see its true nature? Do Great and Powerful administrators and tenured faculty members manufacture and manipulate that environment so that most of us become lulled by the pretenses, promises, and prestige of academia? Have we become lulled into a false sense of security like Dorothy's crew in the poppy field?

The purpose of this article is to discuss several issues surrounding the concept and practice of professional integrity in American institutions of higher education. We hope to address some of the issues faced by academics as they work in the educational environment and

to highlight some of the more troubling practices undertaken by faculty and administrators within this environment.

This is not a traditional "research article" relying on references published in top-tier academic journals, but the material can be considered common knowledge among academics, although we will discuss issues more commonly considered "cocktail" talk. We reveal and openly discuss what some may consider academia's "dirty little secrets," but we believe that, to resolve some of the problems and alleviate some real concerns, communication and discussion are necessary. This is meant to be a starting point.

Academic and Professional Integrity

Higher education in America in the 21st Century continues to be under attack from numerous foes. Most are old adversaries, but some are very new. The general public's waning confidence in academic practices such as tenure, sabbaticals, research activities, and consulting has led more and more institutions to succumb to pressure to produce signs of accountability for external constituencies (i.e., post-tenure review, institutional effectiveness reports, fiscal accountability, performance funding, and evidence of student performance). Many of the freedoms and luxuries enjoyed by colleagues of the past quickly have dissipated and exist only as vague memories to some and as legends to most of us currently working in higher education.

If the potential external issues facing academic practitioners were not dire enough, it seems that a growing number of internal problems continue to develop, often initiated and exacerbated by the academics themselves. Some even may argue that the worst enemy an academic can have is another academic. A comment often made by frustrated faculty members across the United States is that teaching would be great but for the students, but more would

probably emphatically agree that teaching would be great but for their colleagues and the environment within which they must work.

We argue that due to the "nature of the business," maintaining one's integrity is a very demanding effort. Internal and external influences, demands, and attacks, make it very easy (almost required) for a faculty member sometimes to abandon their personal ethical beliefs in order to survive in institutions of higher learning in the United States.

As American institutions of higher learning compete with each other they also compete with themselves. Post-secondary education as a whole remains under attack by those outside of academia who question the small teaching loads, the granting of tenure, huge budgets, and contract deals of some in faculty positions. The academic "grunt" who is teaching a four/four load with six course preparations each year generally does not draw this attention. Instead, those who have very lucrative positions in academia, and who rarely seem to actually *teach,* are questioned.

A cynic would argue that integrity often is hyped as a panacea, when in reality it is generally filled with mostly inactive and ineffective ingredients, like Professor Marvel's snake oils, cure-alls and elixirs. But, as with the old snake oils, profit margins generally are high. Cutthroat competition for students among institutions makes packaging crucial. Some may argue that institutions often even go so far as to facilitate misperceptions to the point of committing fraud in order to attract talented students and faculty to their programs.

Institutions may bank on consumer naiveté (i.e., parents and students). They know that if their logo appears solid enough, and their television advertisements and web pages are professional enough, consumers will perceive greater trustworthiness and quality. This

perception of trustworthiness and quality simply comes from the historical trust that Americans have placed in their institutions of higher learning.

Defining Integrity

It is standard practice for academic institutions to craft definitions of academic integrity for their students and of professional integrity for their faculty, staff, and administrators. The definition below from the Office of Student Judicial Affairs at the University of California, Davis, seems to cover both academic integrity issues and issues of professional integrity.

> Adherence to moral and ethical principles; honesty. The key to integrity is consistency--not only setting high personal standards for oneself (honesty, responsibility, respect for others, fairness) but also living up to those standards each day. One who has integrity is bound by and follows moral and ethical standards even when making life's hard choices, choices which may be clouded by stress, pressure to succeed, or temptation (http://sja.ucdavis.edu/integ1.htm, p.1).

Academic Versus Professional Integrity

Although this article focuses on professional integrity, it is necessary to distinguish that concept from the concept of academic integrity. Academic integrity concerns student relationships to each other, to faculty, to their institutions, and to their coursework and scholarship. This concept also encompasses how academics engage in scholarship. Professional integrity is more concerned with faculty relationships with each other, with the administration, with the institution, and with colleagues in their field at other institutions. Moreover, this type of integrity (or lack thereof) often can impact faculty-student relationships in a negative way.

Integrity and the Faculty-Student Relationship

Like the Scarecrow who needed only the Diploma from the Wizard to become intelligent and educated, it sometimes feels that higher education has become more concerned with passing out degrees rather than education. This lead to the inevitable conclusion that many institutions

are “out for themselves” and not “out for their students,” with an eye on the bottom line, enrollments, credit hours, and profit margins.

Due to increasing competition among institutions of higher learning and declining numbers of traditional age college students, many faculty and administrators must face tests of their own academic integrity. Many recruiting and admission practices currently being utilized by schools across the country are hard for academics to accept. “Open door” policies and the lowering of entrance requirements allow some students into coursework for which they simply are not prepared. The burden for preparation and remediation shifts to the faculty member who is held at least partially accountable for that student’s success or failure. As most academics realize, a high number of failures in one’s classes, while probably a sign of course rigor, also may draw criticism from academic administrators who must answer to superiors about declining retention rates, persistence, and enrollments.

Enrollment management offices and academic departments frequently battle over who actually controls programs and their content. Academic departments clash with their faculties over who actually controls individual courses and their content. A particular university may be able to control who is recruited and who is allowed to enroll in classes, but the individual faculty member controls what happens once the classroom door closes.

This fact emphasizes faculty members and what they actually do in the classroom. Conflict is generated over the material that is taught in a class. A distinction is drawn between teaching content and teaching personal views, experiences, or philosophies. Teaching personal perspectives is much more entertaining than teaching actual course content, for both the students and the faculty member. As a result, students develop preferences for faculty who use this

method, rather than for faculty who teach more content. The former is usually more popular, while the latter is viewed as more demanding.

This phenomenon may be especially prevalent at the graduate level where often faculty members appear to generate "mini-me's" rather than to encourage individual and original thought among their protégés. Sadly, in many academic departments across the country, genuine concerns have evolved that faculty members may be tempted to engage in a type of academic exploitation rather than to develop and maintain true mentoring relationships.

It is not uncommon, for example, for colleagues to become very petty when involved in academic or philosophical or procedural confrontations. This pettiness can, unfortunately, lead to the involvement of students, placing them in the untenable situation of playing "middle-man" or "go-between." Worse yet, students often play very active roles in departmental "rumor mills" involving faculty. The ultimate resolution is that students feel that they should align themselves with one faculty member or faction rather than another.

In some institutions, especially those with graduate programs, students often are encouraged to actually "pick a side" rather than "pick an interest," and may feel (or actually be) pressured to decide which faculty members they will work with and those they will not. Quite often, once they identify one primary faculty member with whom they wish to work, other choices for additional help are dictated. The chosen faculty often will tell the student who he or she will and will not work with, thus restricting the student's choices. Environments develop wherein cooperation among faculty to serve the student's best interests will turn into very competitive environments in which faculty jockey for position, with status being defined by the number and quality of students they have working with them.

It is not difficult to see how faculty-student academic relationships and interactions frequently are impacted by a faculty member's level of professional integrity. It also is not difficult to foresee how these professional conflicts and compromises of integrity directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, involve students, and usually with some degree of some type of harm.

Professional Integrity, Faculty Expectations, and Evaluation Criteria

We circumscribe our discussion of professional integrity in American higher education around the Statement on Professional Ethics, as established by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP, 1996). Few other points during an academic career involve professional integrity more than evaluations and reviews.

Theoretically, criteria for performance and faculty evaluations are grouped into the three main areas of teaching, scholarship, and service. In practice, however, a fourth criterion often surfaces, however intentionally or unintentionally, during the evaluation process. The collegiality a person exhibits often plays a role in his or her evaluation. While considerations of a person's collegiality may, at first, appear to be necessary in an academic setting, those considerations very frequently are suspect in actual application. Below, we examine each of the evaluation areas in terms of professional integrity.

Teaching

The *AAUP* Statement on Professional Ethics (1996) posits that:

> As teachers, professors encourage the free pursuit of learning in their students. They hold before them the best scholarly and ethical standards of their discipline. Professors demonstrate respect for students as individuals and adhere to their proper roles as intellectual guides and counselors. Professors make every reasonable effort to foster honest academic conduct and to ensure that their evaluations of students reflect each student's true merit. They respect the confidential nature of the relationship between professor and student. They avoid any exploitation, harassment, or discriminatory treatment of students. They

> acknowledge significant academic or scholarly assistance from them. They protect their academic freedom (http://www.aaup.org/statements/Redbook/Rbethics.htm).

These are laudable goals to which every academic responsible for the education of students aspire. Occasionally, however, these aims become obscured in the day to day practice of teaching due to several practical difficulties related to the task and to the environment.

Academic gypsies and squatters. During an academic's professional career, some may be forced or choose to frequently change institutions, so that they become somewhat of an "academic gypsy." Those who are forced to move may do so because of conflict with other faculty members, with administrations, or with students. It simply may be that one just does not "fit" with their colleagues. Very often, those wishing for career advancement must change institutions to gain administrative promotions or opportunities.

Conversely, some individuals settle at one institution, somewhat like "academic squatters" who obtain a position that they love (due to location, environment, level of administrative oversight, etc.), and never leave. Over time, salary compression will ensure that these individuals are paid less and work more than their newer counterparts, but dogged determination and perseverance often ensure tenure, if not promotion. Tenured individuals who have been at a place for 20 years, but still are at the rank of Assistant or Associate Professor exemplify the squatter.

Both gypsies and squatters bring with them interesting considerations. Gypsies may be viewed as less reliable and squatters may be seen as resistant to change and progress within a department.

Faculty popularity, groupies, and mentees. Another negative aspect that often arises in academic departments is professional jealous between faculty members. Many times the source

of this jealously derives from one faculty member being more popular with students than another. The source of this popularity is worthy of examination. One would hope that popularity with students would come from a faculty member upholding professional standards and providing rigorous, but fair instruction to their students. Such faculty should attract students who want to obtain an education and to be challenged.

Popularity, however, more often is the result of a failure to meet rigorous academic standards or to provide a stimulating and challenging intellectual environment. A popular professor is too frequently the one who tells wonderful "war stories" or who is an "easy A." This causes an unfair burden upon those who teach content and who work hard to expand the intellectual and educational experiences of their students.

Sometimes a faculty member's popularity with students seems suspect to observers. Academics who have enjoyed some level of popularity with their students sometimes will hear their students characterized more as "groupies" than as "mentees."

Situations relating to the popularity or unpopularity of particular faculty can have drastic consequences, manifesting as departmental conflicts that administrators have to eventually resolve. Less popular faculty may make unfounded accusations against their more popular counterparts or may attempt to change their methods in efforts to become more popular. Popular faculty may isolate themselves to shield themselves from attacks and accusations, or may change their behaviors in an attempt to become less popular. This can damage or disillusion a student who considers that faculty member a true mentor.

Scholarship

According to the *AAUP* Statement on Professional Ethics (1996):

> Professors, guided by a deep conviction of the worth and dignity of the advancement of knowledge, recognize the special responsibilities placed upon

> them. Their primary responsibility to their subject is to seek and to state the truth as they see it. To this end professors devote their energies to developing and improving their scholarly competence. They accept the obligation to exercise critical self-discipline and judgment in using, extending, and transmitting knowledge. They practice intellectual honesty. Although professors may follow subsidiary interests, these interests must never seriously hamper or compromise their freedom of inquiry (http://www.aaup.org/statements/Redbook/Rbethics.htm).

Similar discussions within academic units are taking place across the country as expectations for scholarship become more demanding. These discussions involve questions of new standards, how they can be met, and how one can effectively combine the roles of scholar and teacher. Regional community colleges probably host the most heated debates regarding these issues, as senior administrations attempt to move their teaching-focused institutions toward becoming more research-oriented. These changes have likely contributed to fears and frustrations among many academic professional teaching in these types of institutions.

Maintaining the status quo or rocking the boat. Another consideration, especially for senior faculty members, is that of mentoring junior faculty who are expected to involve themselves in activities that positively contribute to their progress toward tenure. Unfortunately, however, some junior faculty may find themselves in situations where senior faculty have not maintained their productivity and have little to contribute to the progress of their more inexperienced counterparts. Alternatively, junior faculty may not feel this mentoring is necessary to obtain tenure because departmental or university standards appear to be very undemanding. This places young faculty in tenuous positions. They may feel pressure to maintain the status quo and to not do "too much." This puzzling pressure to do less often results from peers who are afraid that a productive and successful colleague will only bring attention to their own scholarly shortcomings. Within some departments, faculty members who have worked together for a number of years may actually have established a *norm* or a *standard* by which they

operate and judge each other. This norm sets the tone for tenure and promotion recommendations and for merit increases, so they are likely to remain resistant to challenge.

Extremely productive faculty often will be forced to choose between maintaining the status quo (even when it is at a level far below that faculty person's potential) and rocking the boat by challenging those standards. Tension and frustration that manifests from this predicament can lead to a myriad of issues in a department.

Collaborations within and without. As a partial remedy, academics sometimes choose to collaborate on writing and scholarly activities with colleagues who are in other departments or at other institutions. This decision can have both positive and negative ramifications, but some may feel this is a wiser course of action because it circumvents daily confrontations if a project does not go well. Failed projects with colleagues at other institutions are easier to deal with than those with a colleague in the next office.

Finally, professional jealousies can erupt if one faculty member has great success with an outside colleague and not with "one of their own." This pettiness could also result in the feeling that the successful collaborator believes that no one "local" is competent enough to participate as a co-author in their scholarly efforts.

Academic freedom, conflict of interest, and conflict of commitment. Scholarly activities and issues of academic freedom involve numerous concerns that are beyond the scope of this article. Although academic freedom is a term with which most academic professionals are familiar, two other concerns may be more relevant, but less frequently noted, for most faculty.

One of these is conflict of interest. The scholarly activities of faculty who generate grants and contract, especially as consultants, may provoke questions of conflicting interests. At one time, a controversial issue related to questions of conflict involved faculty members

requiring their own published books be purchased for their classes. Given the recent proliferation of consulting opportunities (online teaching, adjunct teaching, governmental agencies, policy-oriented think-tanks, private grants and contracts, etc.), however, the complexity of this matter has grown exponentially over the past several years and has expanded the potential gray areas related to academic freedom. Universities now regularly require faculty to file Conflict of Interest Statements within which they are required to disclose any outside work they do that could potentially be accomplished as a faculty member at the institution. Other places require the disclosure of any outside work, whether or not it has the potential to conflict with university endeavors (e.g., working as wait staff at a local restaurant).

A related subject is conflict of commitment, when an academic professional is engaged in outside opportunities to an extreme. This situation involves questions of whether an academic can be objective when, faced with opposing perspectives, he or she is able to benefit from either. This dilemma results when academics transform their research interests into consulting efforts or grants and contacts which end up generating full-time positions. This quandary brings internal and external scorn when a faculty member essentially is found to have two full-time jobs. The university administrator must question whether the faculty member truly is meeting their obligations to the institution, the department, and to the students.

Service

In terms of the service requirement, the AAUP (1996) states that:

> As members of their community, professors have the rights and obligations of other citizens. Professors measure the urgency of these obligations in the light of their responsibilities to their subject, to their students, to their profession, and to their institution. When they speak or act as private persons they avoid creating the impression of speaking or acting for their college or university. As citizens

> engaged in a profession that depends upon freedom for its health and integrity, professors have a particular obligation to promote conditions of free inquiry and to further public understanding of academic freedom (http://www.aaup.org/statements/Redbook/Rbethics.htm).

Service often is an area of contention in academics. University service is a given. The life of an academic involves immeasurable hours spent working on committee assignments. This service is expected and serves as an aspect of one's evaluation. Individuals also are expected to offer community service as well. As the AAUP statement suggests, faculty members are to offer this service to educate the public and to contribute to the public good while not appearing to speak for their departments or for their institutions.

Service and service to self. It is a persisting temptation in the academic environment to use community service opportunities as a venue to increase personal, profitable opportunities. Community-oriented projects commonly result in multiple networking opportunities through which academic professional may personally benefit. Increasingly, with faculty salaries in some institutions pitifully behind others, academics may feel entitled to attempt to supplement their salaries by making deals "on the side" or "under the table," especially if the faculty member can be hired by the community agency to fulfill a need at a much lower rate than if the work was channeled through the university. With facilities and administrative (F & A) fees over 40% at many institutions and faculty supplemental pay caps, it also becomes more appealing to the community agency to save that 40% fee, increase the consultants pay rate, and still save money that is better spent accomplishing the agency's needs within the grant.

Doing good and looking good. Outsiders sometimes look at the materials that faculty members produce and the projects within which they are engaged and question whether these pursuits are to *do* good or simply to *look* good. Academics, like all human beings, have egos, so we tend to seek activities that generate positive feedback and results for ourselves. Conducting

research for the sake of research, or engaging in service for the limelight or for the connections casts doubt on legitimate pursuits that are initiated with the goal of problem-solving or altruistic desires to help others.

Departmental goals and personal goals. Another area of possible conflict for faculty pertaining to service relates to departmental goals and personal goals. If one's department chooses to undertake a number of community service efforts that tax departmental resources, and these efforts are not relevant to the service goals of individual faculty, conflicts and tension are inevitable. Requiring faculty to participate in such tasks certainly may provoke feelings of frustration as these requirements pull faculty away from their chosen areas of service in the field.

One might argue that potential faculty members should know the direction of a department or institution prior to accepting employment therein, so they should not be unhappy or surprised. As those who have been involved in higher education for any length of time will quickly point, however, institutional, departmental, and programmatic directions can, and do, change frequently and rapidly, and can involve drastic changes.

Collegiality

While the *AAUP* Statement on Professional Ethics (1996) does not recognize *collegiality* as a proper evaluation criterion, it does make a statement on interactions between academics:

> As colleagues, professors have obligations that derive from common membership in the community of scholars. Professors do not discriminate against or harass colleagues. They respect and defend the free inquiry of associates. In the exchange of criticism and ideas professors show due respect for the opinions of others. Professors acknowledge academic debt and strive to be objective in their professional judgment of colleagues. Professors accept their share of faculty responsibilities for the governance of their institution. (http://www.aaup.org/statements/Redbook/Rbethics.htm).

This statement provides a utopian view of the relationships for which academics should strive in their professional and personal interactions with colleagues. *Collegiality* is the term

most often used to describe these interactions. As previously noted, all of us engaged in the academic endeavor, whether we are staff, junior or tenured faculty, or administrators, have the human proclivity to judge others by their ability to fit in and get along with us. We tend to be attracted to people who are of like minds and interests and repulsed by those who do not fit our conceptions of normal or acceptable. Although departments frequently and loudly proclaim their desire to create diversity within their departments, we question the type of diversity sought. Do departments seek to have demographic diversity (i.e., race/ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, disability) because they believe that will automatically result in diversity of opinion and interest, or do departments seek philosophical or conceptual diversity which could result in true variety? It is our contention that, in most cases, potential new faculty hires and academic professionals being evaluated for tenure are primarily assessed for their ability to fit in and be a good colleague.

Collegiality as a criterion for faculty evaluation. In 1999, the *AAUP* issued a formal position on the use of collegiality in faculty evaluations (http://www.aaup.org/statements/Redbook/collegia.htm). The language in the statement reminds the reader that the traditional evaluation of faculty for promotion, renewal, tenure, and other purposes involves teaching, scholarship, and service. They cautioned against an increasing tendency to "unofficially" add collegiality as a fourth area of evaluation.

The *AAUP* is quick to denounce those who urge the use of collegiality as an evaluation criterion in decisions of hiring, dismissal, reappointment, promotion, and tenure. Concerns among university and college governing boards regarding the "fit" of their chosen administrations, and whether these appointed individuals will "work well" with the board and govern the institution under the general "philosophy" of the board, often trickle down and

become concerns of mid-level administrators who are responsible for making employment decisions. We argue that this trickle-down effect commonly results in department chairs evaluating how a potential (or current) faculty member "fits" with them, rather than how that person suits the whole department or contributes to the philosophical or conceptual diversity.

We also suggest that we, as faculty members, are most guilty of using collegiality as an evaluative criterion. This phenomenon is discouraged by the *AAUP* for numerous reasons. We agree with this position, but realize that attempting to isolate a colleague's personality and his or her perceived "fit" within a department from his or her professional accomplishments and potential for success may be fruitless. We are, after all, human and inherently judgmental. That said, we offer some potential pitfalls of using collegiality to judge colleagues and of creating an environment too collegial.

Collegiality in the real world. An academic environment within which everyone gets along and works well together seems desirable and valuable, in theory. In practice, however, this type of environment may be perilous. We believe it is imperative, however, to draw a distinct line between being a "good colleague" and getting too "cozy." One of the dangers is that an over-emphasis on working well together may encourage academics to become overly comfortable, overly familiar, overly involved, and overly personal with each other. This is particularly risky when administrators are involved, given their position of power and authority over faculty, and given that they may frequently find themselves in situations wherein they will have to make potentially negative decisions about their faculty friends.

Seasoned academics often will offer unsolicited advice to younger faculty about the importance of keeping one's professional life separate from one's personal life. An atmosphere that emphasizes, even subtly, collegiality, hinders this separation. Again, it is human nature for

us to want to socialize and to learn more about those with whom we have daily interactions (and who often have the responsibility of making decisions about us that impact our careers). This tendency frequently results in more and more social contact between colleagues, blurring the essential division between the professional and the personal.

One option that faculty may have to try and keep their personal lives out of the departmental arena, is to develop and maintain deeper professional (and personal) relationships with outside colleagues from other institutions. Many feel that it is better to only write, research, and publish with colleagues with whom they do not interact on a daily basis.

While this may alleviate some potential problems, it creates others. A faculty member's popularity and contact with outside colleagues sometimes leads to professional jealousy among those within his or her own department with whom he or she does not have such a relationship. The consequences of this jealousy can lead to faculty who bicker, undermine each other, and who pit students against other students and against each other. At worst, there are grievances and lawsuits.

Very often, those who do not share the collegial desire of many in a particular department might be labeled as one who simply does not fit in. The inescapable obvious outcome of this labeling process is figurative or literal separation. Ironically, the misfit who simply chooses to leave a department is taking the path of least resistance. Conflict between colleagues within a department too frequently results in actual or threatened lawsuits which have the potential to lead to "stalemate" situations between faculty members and institutions. Commonly, institutions have no real "cause" to dismiss an employee or to take any negative recourse, but feel it is the only way to alleviate departmental conflict (which probably stemmed from personality conflicts between faculty members in the first place). In most cases, the tenured or more entrenched

faculty member will win the conflict, but cause possibly irreparable damage to their department, university, and students through their victory.

At this point, it is useful to analogize a faculty member's relationship to his or her department and institution as a commitment similar to marriage. This marriage brings with it the usual connotations of expected loyalty, dedication, faithfulness, and trust. When a faculty member decides to leave an institution, his or her departure often is viewed as a divorce of sorts. Simply shaking hands and leaving a job is normally impossible. We inherently desire not to burn bridges with colleagues but to leave on the best terms possible, even if leaving is the result of negative conflict with others. Unfortunately, it is nearly impossible to do so, given the personal connections involved with collegiality. As a result, many academics must risk an increasing number of potentially negative references as they attempt to progress in their careers or to seek different positions. What really happened at an academic's former institution often is irrelevant, and what remains is the story circulated by his or her detractors. Unbelievably, even a faculty member who never had a significant problem at an institution risks negative references simply because they had the nerve to leave a position and colleagues.

Some faculty members decide merely to have an "affair" by accepting a visiting appointment at another university. Academic professionals sometimes make this decision to have a change of pace or possibly to "romance" another institution in hopes of obtaining permanent employment. If, however, this affair does result in a "union," the cheating faculty member hazards even more negative consequences from the colleagues they abandoned.

Job searches and appointments. Seeking a new position or appointment is probably one of the most terrifying experiences academics have in their careers, aside from tenure, promotion, and reappointment decisions. Most of us would agree that the prospect of reference checks and

of asking friends and acquaintances to write reference letters on our behalf is frightening, humbling, and demoralizing. This ritual, however, is part of the process and expected as individuals search for new positions.

Finally, we argue that a departmental quest to find the best person for the job sometimes entails finding the best friend for the job. Departments may encounter a decision where they must evaluate a credential-based attraction against a physical-based attraction. Sometimes, hiring decisions seem to be based on choosing a person whose physical appearance suits the departmental character rather than choosing a person whose qualifications would fulfill departmental needs. Similarly, hiring decisions may be influenced by "back-scratching" or paying back favors that are owned to outside or inside colleagues.

Wicked Witches and Flying Monkeys

It is doubtful that collegiality ever will become a standard fourth criterion in faculty evaluation or an "official" requirement in the hiring process. But, given that academics are humans and given the environment in which they generally live, collegiality always will play a major role in decisions that are made and actions that are taken.

While a feeling or an action may seem like the best or most natural thing to do, it may not be the most appropriate thing to do. Academics overly concerned with ensuring collegiality may sacrifice more important considerations, such as departmental diversity. At first glance, homogeneity within a department or a university seems positive and something that should be encouraged. Diversity, however, has become a treasured commodity because we believe it to contribute to a positive learning environment. We realize that it is better for students to encounter of myriad of different types of teachers so that they can develop into more well

rounded learners. It is natural to be more comfortable with those who are similar, but such comfort inhibits growth and new development.

Another consideration that may be sacrificed in the pursuit of collegiality is that of true academic freedom. One's research agenda and interests and their "fit" in a department frequently are intimately connected. Many academics can offer numerous examples where their "eclectic" research agenda did not set well with their colleagues. Those who encourage (*enforce* may be a more appropriate term) homogeneity may at the same time make others feel as if they must increase, decrease, or change their scholarly activities to become more in line with the status quo. This is a direct threat to academic freedom.

Additionally, the use of collegiality pressures those who do not wish to follow the status quo. Their efforts outside of the mainstream may be misconstrued as lack of enthusiasm or dedication. As a result, those individuals will become less and less involved in the efforts of others and in departmental initiatives. Obviously, this stifles faculty debate and discussion (and potentially growth, progress, and improvement).

Some academics have been fortunate enough to build departments that work well together and are very collegial in nature. This success often leads those involved to be very protective of maintaining this environment. The desire to protect and maintain the established norm often leads to professional competence being discounted in favor of personality in hiring, tenuring, and promotion decisions. Faculty members in these types of environments sometimes feel that they may be able to teach a new faculty member how to do the job, but they cannot teach them how to be collegial. Very difficult decisions have to be made to determine what is best for a department, to identify those who can do the job the best, or perhaps to just find the person who can endure.

Over the Rainbow

Unlike Dorothy, we simply cannot click our heels and have our problems disappear. Issues related to professional integrity affect each one of us as we engage in academic endeavors, whether we are participating in service activities, conducting research, or assisting students. Our students, communities, families, and peers also are affected. The situations discussed within this article can be painful to tolerate and even more painful to openly discuss.

The process of questioning and criticizing one's own field of employment and issuing somewhat of an indictment against commonly practiced and perhaps even widely accepted (or at least widely tolerated) practices is risky. It was, unfortunately, our quest to obtain the witches broom. In writing this article, we were forced to look behind the green curtain, past the fantastic claims of cure-alls and magical elixirs, and beyond the packaging and accouterments of credibility to the reality. We are human beings who try and fail to keep the personal out of the professional. We try and fail to not judge people and to not evaluate their worth in the profession by their personalities, by our own level of comfort in dealing with them, or by our perceptions of their abilities rather than more objective evaluations.

You may have read this article, sometimes nodding along the way because you recognized people and situations, and sometime shaking your head in disagreement because you never have encountered (either personally or peripherally) a particular situation. Many of you may never have personally experienced any of the difficulties described in this article and may believe that you never will. However, just as Dorothy's house was unexpectedly and randomly sucked up into the tornado, you may find yourself harshly and abruptly tossed into such situations with little or no warning.

This article cannot offer easy or clear solutions to the concerns raised within. Some even might argue that concerns related to professional integrity and collegiality are not problems in the first place, or that issues in this article do not need to be openly discussed or evaluated. A few even would argue that academics are professionals and that they can handle any difficulties, and should be trusted to do so in an appropriate, professional manner.

For those of you, however, who feel that we raise significant concerns in this paper, we offer little in the way of solutions. As with any positive academic practice, institutions must focus on developing clear definitions of scholarship, teaching, and service. These definitions should have the virtues of collegiality reflected to address what is natural to academics. A very clear distinction between the personal and the professional in all academic and professional endeavors must be developed and maintained. Lack of collegiality ought never to form the basis for non-reappointment, denial of tenure, or dismissal for cause. Presidents, provosts, deans, department chairs, and faculty, as human beings, have an inherent knack for committing acts which could possibly (and probably should) result in their dismissal or replacement. The additional pressure of being "liked" as an accompaniment to their likelihood of academic survival in modern institutions of higher learning really is unnecessary.

Like Dorothy, who discovered that she had the power within herself to get back over the rainbow, we have the power to control how we relate to others within an academic environment. We need not be powerful Wizards or good Witches to resolve our conflicts. We only need to tear down the curtain, acknowledge our humanity, and take positive steps to prevent some of our more negative inherent tendencies from destroying ourselves and each other.

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